



Home > Articles > People working fewer hours

# People working fewer hours

Released 21/05/2020

 **Source:** [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, April 2020](#)

## On this page

[People working fewer hours than usual](#)

[No work, not enough work available or stood down](#)

['Began, left or lost a job'](#)

[Further information](#)

In April 2020, there were around 5.6 million people who worked fewer than their usual hours. Of these, 3.7 million were employed full-time and 1.9 employed part-time.

## People working fewer hours than usual

The most common reasons people worked fewer than their usual hours in April 2020, were:

- no work, not enough work available, or stood down (32.4%);
- annual leave, holidays, flexitime or long service leave (32.3%);
- Other reasons (10.7%); and
- Began, left or lost a job (6.3%).

Table 1 shows the relative monthly movements between March and April for the past five years. Consistent with the unprecedented increase in the number of people working fewer hours than usual, there were large changes in the number of people reporting particular reasons for working fewer hours than usual.

Between March and April 2020, the number of people working fewer than their usual hours due to 'No work, not enough work available, or stood down' almost quadrupled (up 286%) and those who 'Began, left or lost a job' increased over nine-fold (up 847%).

**Table 1: Reasons people worked less than usual hours – March to April movements**

No work, not enough work available, or stood down	Own illness or injury or sick leave	Personal reasons, study, caring for sick or injured family	Annual leave, holidays, flexitime or long service leave	Began, left or lost a job
Apr-16	0%	4%	4%	12%
Apr-17	-20%	-20%	-12%	294%
Apr-18	-5%	-25%	-11%	132%
Apr-19	5%	9%	18%	-15%
Apr-20	286%	-38%	-35%	36%
				847%

Source: 6291.0.55.001 Data Cube EM2a

The number of people working fewer hours in April due to annual leave, holidays, flexitime or long service leave is usually high in April due to public and school holidays. However, changes between March and April (and between April and previous Aprils) tend to vary over time, based on changes in the timing of Easter (and school holidays).

Table 2 shows a similar pattern with the year on year change in the reasons people worked fewer hours than usual.

**Table 2: Reasons people worked less than usual hours – year on year movements**

No work, not enough work available, or stood down	Own illness or injury or sick leave	Personal reasons, study, caring for sick or injured family	Annual leave, holidays, flexitime or long service leave	Began, left or lost a job
Apr-16	28%	55%	87%	-7%
Apr-17	-17%	-21%	-17%	16%
Apr-18	7%	2%	4%	16%
Apr-19	13%	39%	34%	-2%
Apr-20	407%	-30%	-34%	1085%

Source: 6291.0.55.001 Data Cube EM2a

## No work, not enough work available or stood down

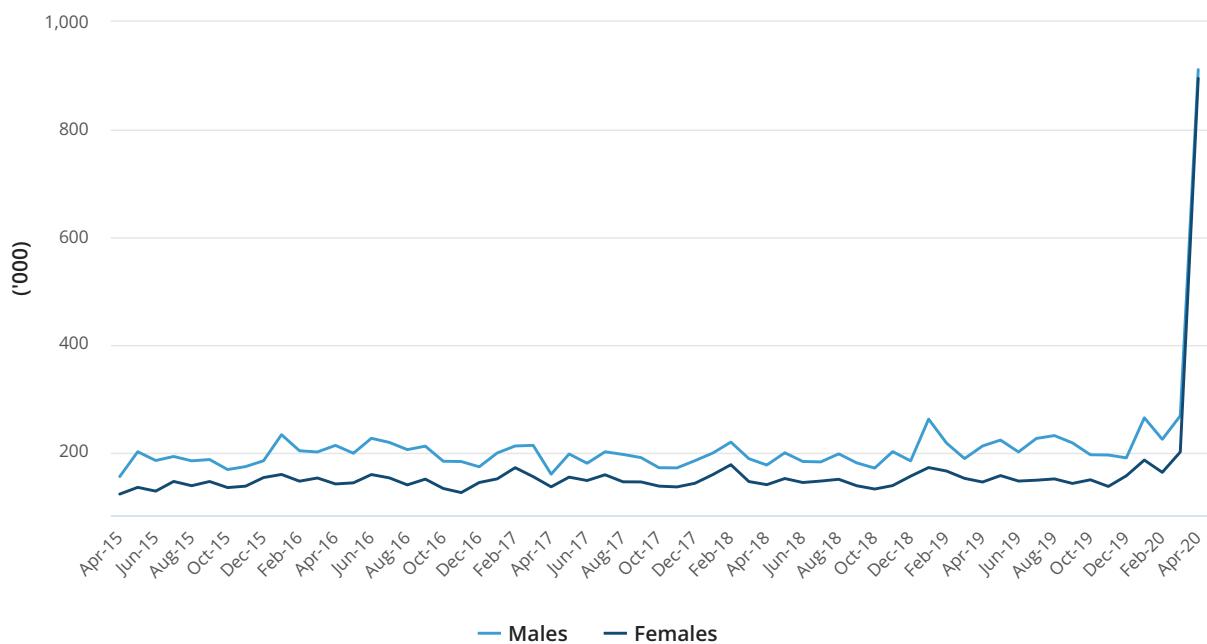
As highlighted in [Insights into hours worked \(<https://beta.abs.gov.au/articles/insights-hours-worked-april-2020>\)](https://beta.abs.gov.au/articles/insights-hours-worked-april-2020), in the April issue of Labour Force, Australia, there were 1.8 million employed people who worked less than their usual hours for economic reasons (that is, there was no work, not enough work available or stood down). Of these:

- over 750,000 did not work at all; and

- over 1 million people worked some hours, but fewer than they usually work.

Chart 1 shows the number of men and women over the past five years who worked fewer hours than usual as there was no work, not enough work available or they were stood down.

### Chart 1: Employed who worked less than usual hours - No work, not enough work available or stood down



Source: [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6291.0.55.001Apr%202020?OpenDocument\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6291.0.55.001Apr%202020?OpenDocument). Data Cube EM2a.

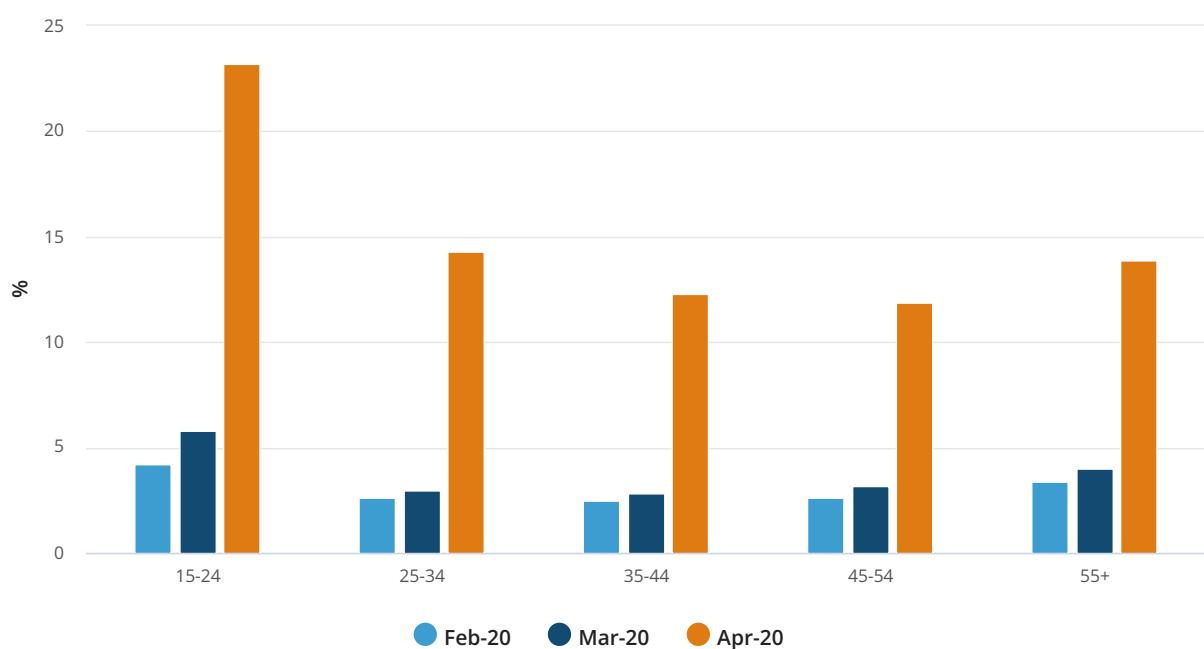
The reasons people work fewer hours varies by age, with young people more impacted by stand-downs than other age groups.

Chart 2 shows the people working fewer hours due to no work, not enough work available or being stood down in each age group, as a proportion of all employed people in that age group.

The prevalence of working fewer hours due to no work, not enough work available or being stood down increased considerably across all age groups. However, this increase was

particularly pronounced amongst young people, with almost a quarter (23%) of all employed young people working fewer hours due to no work, not enough work available or being stood down in April. This compared with 4% in February and 6% in March.

**Chart 2 - Employed who worked less than usual hours - No work, not enough work available or stood down, as a proportion of all employed, by Age**



Source: [Labour Force, Australia \(<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6202.0Apr%202020?OpenDocument>\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6202.0Apr%202020?OpenDocument) Table 22 and unpublished labour force data

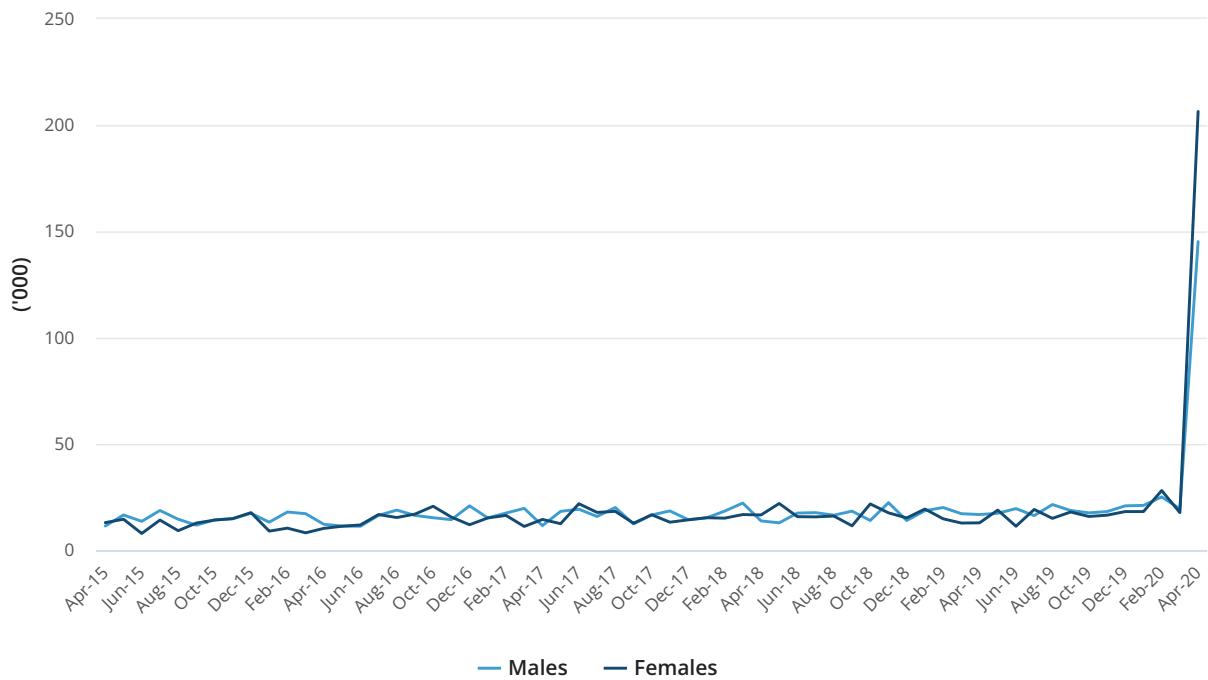
## 'Began, left or lost a job'

In April 2020, there were 350,000 people who worked fewer than their usual hours as they 'began, left or lost a job'. Almost all of these people left or lost a job. These people are still classified as 'Employed' as they continued to have an attachment to their job during the reference week, prior to their job ending.

Chart 3 shows the number of men and women over the past five years who worked fewer

hours than usual as they 'began, left or lost a job'.

**Chart 3: Employed who worked less than usual hours – 'Began, left or lost a job'**



Source: [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed \(<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6291.0.55.001Apr%202020?OpenDocument>\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6291.0.55.001Apr%202020?OpenDocument) Data Cube EM2a.

## Further information

For further information, email [labour.statistics@abs.gov.au](mailto:labour.statistics@abs.gov.au) (<mailto:labour.statistics@abs.gov.au>)..